

Dyscia karsholti sp.n., from Tunisia (Lepidoptera, Geometridae, Ennominae)

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Summary

Dyscia karsholti is described as a new species and placed provisionally in the subgenus *Iberafrina* WEHRLI. It appears to be an endemic form morphologically unlike any congener. It was collected by Mr. O. KARSHOLT taking part in the 1986 Expedition of the Zoological Museum of Copenhagen.

Résumé

Dyscia karsholti de Tunisie est décrite et figurée, attribuée provisoirement au sous-genre *Iberafrina* WEHRLI. Elle semble être une forme endémique, assez différente morphologiquement de toute autre *Dyscia*. M. O. KARSHOLT l'a capturée au cours de l'expédition 1986 du Muséum Zoologique de Copenhague.

Zusammenfassung

Dyscia karsholti aus Tunesien wird beschrieben, abgebildet und vorläufig der Untergattung *Iberafrina* WEHRLI zugewiesen. Sie scheint eine endemische Art zu sein, verschieden von allen anderen *Dyscia*-Formen. Herr O. KARSHOLT, hat sie anlässlich seiner Teilnahme an der Kopenhagen-Museums-Expedition 1986 erbeutet.

Introduction

In a previous article in this journal (WILTSHIRE, 1990 :359) I stated that little was known of the Tunisian Geometridae. However, on reading this, Mr. O. KARSHOLT wrote to tell me that he himself had collected Lepidoptera in Tunisia, including a few *Dyscia* forms, and he kindly sent me these to study, together with other Geometridae from N. Africa and Spain.

Consequently, it can now be stated that at least two species of *Dyscia* inhabit Tunisia, namely :

D. (Iberafrina) penulataria ssp. *combustaria* OBERTHÜR, 1923

1 ♂ (Prep. WCM.16) 20 km s. of Gabes, 18-19.iii.1986, Zoological Museum of Copenhagen University Expedition.

1 ♀ Ain Draham area, 3-19.v.1988, same captors, a smaller specimen.

D. (?Iberafrina) karsholti sp.n. (described below).

[*D.(Zuleika) nobiliaria* BANG-HAAS, 1907 probably also inhabits Tunisia, though not yet taken, being known from both Algeria and Libya.]

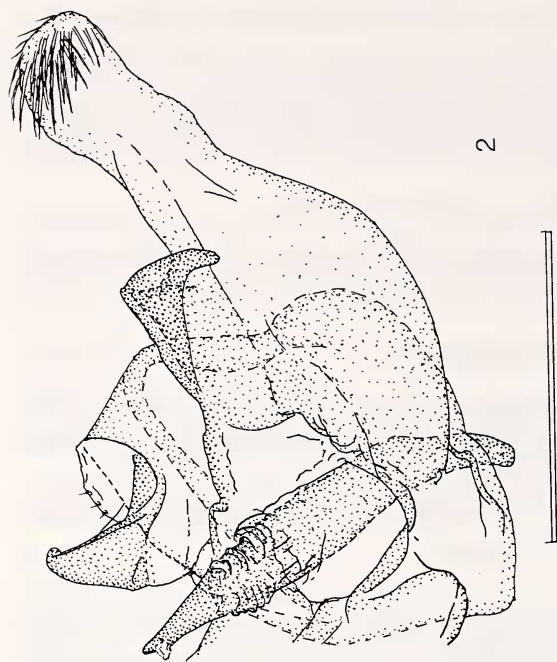
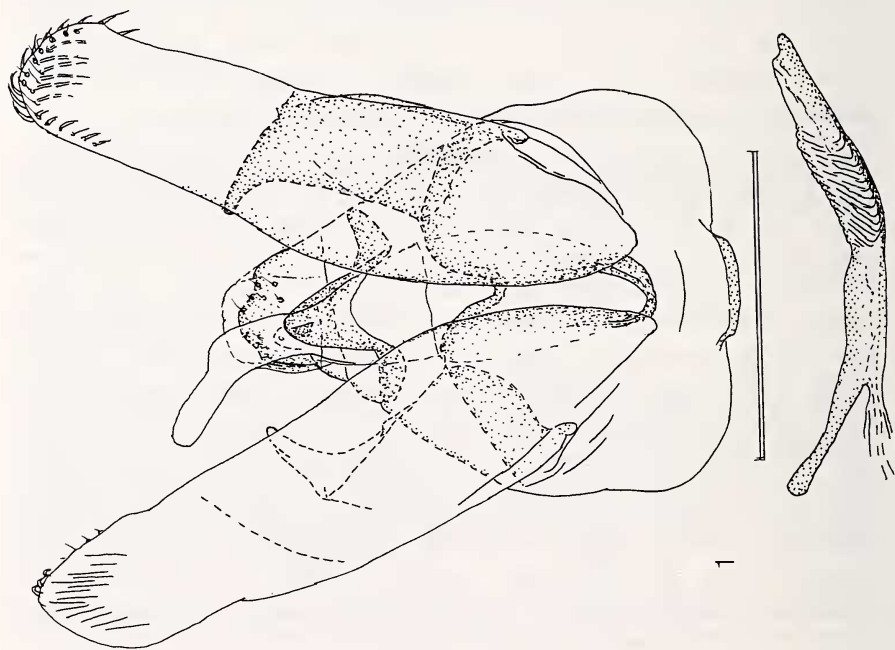
***Dyscia* (subg. *?Iberafrina) karsholti* sp.n.**

HOLOTYPE : ♂ (Prep.WCM.18), 20 km s. of Gabes, 18-19.iii.1986. Zoological Museum of Copenhagen University Expedition. Deposited in the Zoological Museum, Copenhagen.

PARATYPE : ♂ (Prep.WCM.15), data as above. Deposited in British Museum (Natural History), London.

DIAGNOSIS : Wingspan 31 mm. Forewing shape more as in *Zuleika* than *Iberafrina*, with slightly concave costa, outer margin less rounded than *Iberafrina* ; paler brown than *D. (I.) plebejaria* OBERTHÜR, 1910, weaker marked than *D. (I.) p. combustaria*, with cell-spots traceable on upper sides only and absent from hindwings, with weak orange-brown line along costa and termen. Hindwing whitish, slightly orange-brown terminad. In the male genitalia, a strongly sclerotized horn-shaped costal process without spine is an unusual feature.

DESCRIPTION : Antenna of male bipectinated to tip, of female unknown, pale brown with a few white dorsal scales and white scape. Head with white vertex, frons white, slightly orange-tinted scales and reduced, light brown palp. Proboscis lacking. Thorax white above and below, except for a slight orange tinge on prothorax upperside ; legs yellow-brown. Abdomen pale orange-white. Forewing yellowish white, with pale orange costa and termen ; very sparsely scattered with blackish scales visible under magnification. Cell-spot, a pale orange-brown indistinct crescent containing a few blackish scales. Crosslines hardly traceable, but course of postmedian line indicated by a faint orange cloud crossing fork of nervures 8 & 9 (R3 & R4) and very faint orange spots on 2-7. The pale ground is slightly more orange tinted terminad. Hindwing white, slightly irrorated orange-brown terminad, more broadly so at the anal angle ; termen, a weak orange-brown line. Undersides hardly marked, whitish ; the forewing with pale orange tinted costa, the hindwing slightly orange tinted terminad.



Figs 1,2. Male genitalia of *Dyscia karsholti* sp.n. 1. Holotype (Prep. WCM.18) in ventral „shut“ position, valves with ventral border appearing uppermost, aedeagus separated ; 2. Paratype (Prep. WCM.15) in ventral „open“ view, 3/4 aspect, costa appearing uppermost, aedeagus in situ, left valve omitted. Scale bar 1 mm.

MALE GENITALIA : Uncus weak ; gnathos triangular, with terminal hook, but lacking the wide lateral chambers of *D. penulataria* HÜBNER the type species of the subgenus, being more like the gnathos of *D. (I.) plebejaria*. Aedeagus short, tapering distally, without cornuti, with a longer, finer caecum than in the two *Iberafrina* species mentioned. Valve shape, wide basally with strongly sclerotised costal base ending in an inturned sclerotised hook ; the valve also appears medially constricted when forced into the ventral open position (Fig. 2), but not so appearing in the ventral shut position (Fig. 1) ; the costal process lacks the long spines of *D. (I.) penulataria* or the shorter spines of *D. (I.) plebejaria*, being a plain round-tipped hook.

These characters raise the question of the subgeneric characters of *Iberafrina* as defined by WEHRLI in SEITZ Suppl.4. The new species fits better into *Iberafrina* than any other subgenus of *Dyscia*. The capture of females may permit the redefinition of the subgenus.

HABITAT : DR. KARSHOLT caught the two species using a 12W actinic tube between *Nerium* bushes in a nearly dry river-bed. Our knowledge of the usual foodplants of the genus, however, would indicate that the species had not bred on the oleander bushes, but on dwarf steppe herbs on adjacent terrain.

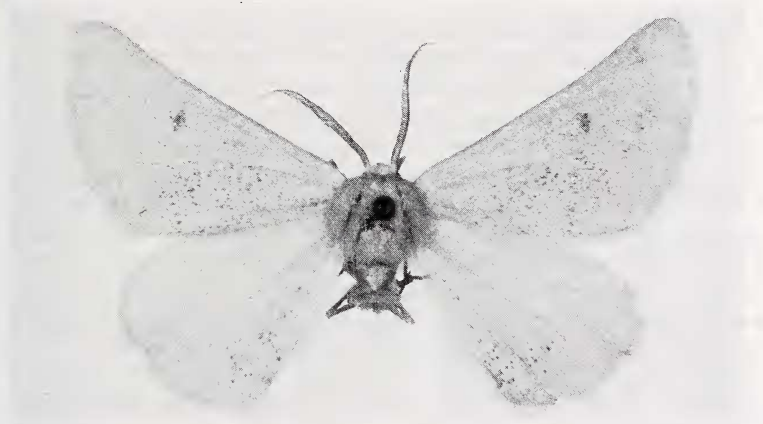


Fig. 3. *Dyscia karsholti* sp.n. ♂ holotype.

Reference

WILTSHIRE, E.P., 1990. *Dyscia senecai* sp.n. from Libya, with notes on some other N. African *Dyscia* species (Geometridae, Ennominae). *Nota lepid.* 12(4) : 354-365.

CORRIGENDUM TO Wiltshire, E. P., 1990. *Nota lepid.* 12 (4) p. 355, line 15 : for 15.VI.1936 read 15.XI.1936.